

CLERK: Mr. President, I have a motion on the desk. Senator Chambers would move to return LB 96 to Select File for a specific amendment, that amendment being to strike the enacting clause.

SPEAKER NICHOL: Senator Chambers.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Mr. Chairman and members of the Legislature, this bill offers the opportunity for a consideration of some very important issues that relate to highway construction and how funds ought to be spent, the priorities that the state ought to establish. Now I'm going to mention a few general comments first and then I am going to tell you some things about the bill itself and if you decide that you are in such a hurry to pass it, you can do so but for my part I don't think the bill is going to accomplish what the introducers want. Now they may think that I am just blowing smoke but I am telling you that I am offering it as my considered opinion that the bill will not empower the state to do what the introducers of this bill want which is to take highway funds and pay the cost of relocation of utilities in connection with construction of the North Freeway in Omaha. But before I go into that I would like to look at LB 344 which was offered by Senator DeCamp dealing with highway bonds. Now an amendment was adopted to that bill which was proposed by the committee which Senator Carsten heads, the Revenue Committee, and they started by saying, "Nebraska highways have been allowed to deteriorate, thus currently offering a very poor transportation system and will continue to deteriorate unless immediate remedial action is taken." Deterioration deals with existing roadways. Remedial action refers to the correction of an existing problem, not new construction. If there is any basis for a discussion of a massive program to rehabilitate the state's existing highways which is the thrust of LB 344 and the adoption of the committee amendment dealing with that aspect of it indicates the Legislature agrees with that even though they didn't agree with the funding by issuance of bonds, it is ridiculous for the state to go into new construction of a road whose need has never been shown to exist. As was stated by a study conducted by the former Governor's office, before Governor Thone, the road starts nowhere and it goes nowhere. Most of it was abandoned but if you go further into the committee amendment on 344 it says, "Funds made available pursuant to this act shall be expended for improving the state's existing highway system." It would take an estimated \$2 billion to bring the existing roads up to standard. Now if you construct a new highway, the North Freeway, it will become a part of the state's system and the state will have the requirement to maintain it. It is not currently main-